



## Tips to Protect your Skin from UV Damage

Getting too much sun can be harmful whatever your age. It exposes your skin to ultra violet radiation (UV rays) that can damage your skin and lead to skin cancer. With good protection against UV rays, most cases of skin cancer could be avoided.

This doesn't mean you have to avoid the sun completely. Sun exposure is the best natural source of vitamin D and is important for general health. You can still go for walks, enjoy the garden and get involved in all of the things you enjoy doing outdoors. Just make sure to think about how you will protect your skin when outside. Here are some tips from the sunsmart code at the cancer society:

- **Seek some shade.** Spending time in the shade is the most effective obvious thing you can do to avoid being in the sun too long. Good shade can give up to 75% protection from UV rays. When outdoors, UV rays can reach you in one of two ways: directly from the sun, indirectly scattered by clouds or particles in the atmosphere. They can also reflect from surfaces like snow, sea water and concrete. Some UV rays can pass through windows. Generally car, home and office windows block most UVB rays but less of the UVA rays. If you are someone who sits at a window all day or drives a lot in the course of your day, you need to use clothes and sunscreen to protect your skin.
- **Slip on some clothes.** One of the simplest things you can do to protect your skin from UV rays is to cover it with clothes. Choose clothes that cover as much skin as possible. For example, wear a shirt with a collar, three-quarter length sleeves and three-quarter length trousers. Some fabrics give better UV protection than others. Clothing offering better sun protection: Linen, cotton and hemp let less UV rays through. Dark clothes block more UV rays than light coloured clothes.
- **Wear sunglasses.** Your eyes can be damaged by UV rays too. Short-term UV exposure can result in mild irritation, difficulty with bright lights, excessive blinking and sunburn of the part of the eye known as the cornea. Long-term exposure can result in cataracts and cancer. Choosing to wear a hat that gives shade to the eyes and sunglasses that give UV protection can help protect your eyes from these conditions.

- **Use sunscreen.** When in Ireland or the UK, wear sunscreen from April to September to reduce your risk of skin cancer. But remember, using sunscreen alone will not give enough protection against UV rays. It is important to use shade, clothes and sunglasses too. In this way you get the best possible protection from UV damage. The type of sunscreen you use is up to you and what you feel comfortable putting on your skin. Creams, lotions, gels and sprays all work but only if used properly. Here are some tips to consider when choosing and using sunscreen:

- Use a 'broad-spectrum' sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB; – SPF minimum 30 and look for these signs ( or ) for UVA protection.
- Apply to dry skin 20 minutes before going outside.
- Be extra careful of those areas that do not get much sun, they will burn more easily.
- For the average adult you will need 35mls of sunscreen to cover the whole body. We recommend using a measure of half a teaspoon of sunscreen to cover each arm, the face, neck and ears. Use a measure of one teaspoon for each leg, the front and the back of the body.
- Reapply every two hours.
- Check the products use-by date and store it below 30°C.
- Choose a water-resistant type if sweating or you are involved in watersports.
- Always check for the UVA logo on the bottle.